

*Max goes down on one knee in front of Sandra.*

Florence, will you do me the honour of becoming my wife? Marry me!

*Jonathan cannot control the cough anymore and sneezes right in between Max and Sandra sitting on the chaise longue.*

Charles is dead. He can never come between us again!

*Annie opens the s. r. door and Jonathan slowly moves towards the door. Exits.*

Florence, Charles is gone and he's never coming back.

SANDRA. Oh Cecil, I can't resist you! I shall, I shall marry you.

MAX. Oh Florence, come into my arms.

*Max pushes Sandra away.*

SANDRA. I shall!

MAX. Kiss me!

SANDRA. Oh Cecil!

*Max and Sandra go to kiss with a dramatic dip, but Robert/Rachel bursts in s. r. door.*

ROBERT/RACHEL. The Inspector requires a pencil. What on earth's going on in here?

SANDRA. Sorry, I felt flustered. Cecil was cooling my brow.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Very well, now I have the pencil I'll be on my...

*Robert/Rachel sees that there is no pencil on the D.S. R. table. He/She picks up the set of keys instead.*

Well now I have the... well now I have the... Now I have the *pencil*. I'll be on my way.

*Robert/Rachel exits, closing the door.*

MAX. Thank God he's/she's gone!

SANDRA. Oh, Cecil! Kiss me a thousand times; I'm yours.

*Dennis/Denise bursts in.*

DENNIS/DENISE. Sorry to interrupt, Miss Colleymoore, Mr. Haversham. I've come to collect the keys to lock us all inside.

MAX. Thank you, Perkins.

*Dennis/Denise sees the keys gone and instead he/she picks up the Inspector's notebook.*

# The 13 Clocks

## ACT ONE

AT RISE: *The house dims to black, the curtain rises in darkness and lights fade up on a scrim curtain painted in an exact copy of the frontispiece of the book. Directly Center Stage below the scrim line we see the back of the WIZARD, seated at a table, facing Upstage, wearing antlers. His pointed cap stands on the floor behind him. The PRINCE, dressed as a minstrel, sits facing the WIZARD, facing the audience and almost completely obscured from their sight.*

WIZARD. Once upon a time—wait— (To PRINCE.)  
What have you done with my hat?

PRINCE. You weren't wearing one.

WIZARD. Of course I was. It's part of the uniform. Officially, . . . as a wizard . . . I cannot give the advice you seek until I am wearing my hat. The sooner you give it back, the sooner you'll hear about the Princess Saralinda.

PRINCE. Look behind you. (*Picks it up and hands it to WIZARD.*) Is this it?

WIZARD. It may be. It seems shorter than I remembered it. However, (*Places it on an antler.*) where was I . . . ah yes . . . (*Drinks.*) Once upon a time.

PRINCE. Must you begin at the beginning?

WIZARD. It's usual in stories . . . Of course, if you've something better to do . . .

PRINCE. I beg your pardon. Please go on.

WIZARD. Once upon a time, in a gloomy castle, on a lonely hill, where there were thirteen clocks that wouldn't go, there lived a cold aggressive Duke and his niece, the

Princess Saralinda. They live there still, to this very day and minute, with the thirteen trembling clocks.

PRINCE. Trembling?

WIZARD. Time lies frozen there. It's always then. It's never now. Even the hands on the Duke's watch and the hands of all the thirteen clocks are frozen. They had all frozen at the same time, on a snowy night, seven years before, and after that, it was always ten minutes to five in the castle.

PRINCE. And Saralinda? . . . is she as cold as the duke and his clocks?

WIZARD. The Princess Saralinda is warm in every wind and weather. She is as warm as he is cold. His hands, you know, are as cold as his smile, and almost as cold as his heart. His nights are spent wickedly scheming as he limps and cackles through the cold corridors of the castle planning new impossible feats for the suitors of Saralinda to perform.

PRINCE. Why then, you think . . . it's impossible for me to win her hand?

WIZARD. As a Wizard, who is very wise, I would say . . . in your case, yes.

PRINCE. Why?

WIZARD. Why? You're not a Prince. Oh, you're quite properly a minstrel. A thing of shreds and patches, singing for pennies and the love of singing. That's all very well, but you're not a Prince. And even Princes have tried to win her hand and all have failed . . . I think.

PRINCE. But you're not certain.

WIZARD. I'm not even certain I'm a Wizard.

PRINCE. You resemble one, all except—

WIZARD. . . . Except these? (*Indicates his antlers.*) It's quite all right. I'm not at all sensitive about them. They come and they go. You see, sometimes . . . when I'm bored . . . or in my cups . . . so to speak . . . I cast spells upon myself. They're rather impressive, I think.

PRINCE. I think so too. But if it's all the same to you

I'm not going to give up so easily on the Princess Saralinda.

WIZARD. Ah yes . . . The Princess Saralinda. Well, you mustn't say I didn't warn you. The castle and the Duke grow colder . . . while Saralinda . . . as a Princess will, even in a place where time lies frozen, becomes a little older . . . but only a little older. She is almost twenty-one . . . I think.

PRINCE. I had always thought that Wizards were sure of everything. That's why I asked for your advice.

WIZARD. I am sure of only two things . . . First, you don't seem to be taking my advice and—second—the exact location of an interesting tavern called the Silver Swan. (*Lights up behind scrim. Scrim up.*) As a matter of fact I must take you there some day.

PRINCE. We've been sitting in the Silver Swan all this time.

WIZARD. Then I'm as good as my word. Taverner, some ale here. (*The Silver Swan is filled with patrons who become curious and gradually add their advice to the WIZARD'S.*) I have here a young wag who wishes to wed the Princess Saralinda. (*All laugh.*)

TAVERNER. That's a good one, Rags.

WIZARD. His name is not Rags. It would be something else than it seems. At least, that would be my guess.

TAVERNER. All right, what is it then?

PRINCE. Xingu.

(*The jovial humor of the tavern fades and slowly everyone turns an incredulous silent stare toward the PRINCE.*)

TOSSPOT. What was it he said he's called?

WIZARD. Xingu.

TALE TELLER. Spell it.

PRINCE. I don't understand.

TOSSPOT. Your name, young bumpkin. Spell it.

PRINCE. X—I—N—G—U. Xingu.

*Chris lifts Annie's face so she looks out to the audience.*

SANDRA. (Off.) I am no murderer!

*Sandra bursts in through the swivel bookcase in her underwear/bathrobe. Chris and Robert/Rachel drop Annie backwards through the window.*

CHRIS. We all know that's not true.

SANDRA. It is true, Inspector!

MAX. You've been exposed.

CHRIS. Very well, Miss Colleymoore, your name can easily be cleared. We must examine Charles' body for evidence of cyanide poisoning. Miss Colleymoore, Perkins, show me to the service quarters so I can check the deceased once more.

DENNIS/DENISE. Inspector.

CHRIS. Arthur, you stay here with Miss Colleymoore and ensure she does not leave this room.

*Max protests about having to stay with an "indecent" Sandra. Chris, Robert/Rachel and Dennis/Denise exit through the door. Sandra and Max are alone again. Max stares at the floor; he cannot look at Sandra in her robe.*

SANDRA. Arthur, you have known me for years, surely you believe I would never do something like this?

MAX. On the contrary, Miss Colleymoore, it was I who discovered you to be the guilty party.

SANDRA. Oh Arthur! How can you? Please, you must protect me from these fiends! I'll do anything to win your trust.

*Sandra throws herself into Max's arms.*

MAX. Miss Colleymoore, you know I cannot resist your feminine charms.

SANDRA. I have seen the way you look at me across the grounds. Even now, the way you're looking at me.

*Max stares away from her.*

Even now, the way you're looking at me... Even now the way you're looking at me!

*Sandra turns Max's head to look at her more forcefully.*

I know how you feel.

MAX. Please, Miss Colleymoore, I am a simple gardener, I...

SANDRA. And you have said before how rad—

*Sandra pulls her hand away from Max's face, accidentally tearing off one of Max's mutton chops. Max takes it back and tries to stick it back on, but it won't stick. Max swaps places with Sandra so his remaining chop is facing the audience. Little vamp here of Max grinning at the audience.*

And you have said before—

*Max holds the loose chop up so it looks like a moustache on his face.*

And you have said before—

*Max holds up the loose chop so it looks like a moustache on Sandra's face.*

And you have said before how radiant I look as I walk across the gardens.

*Sandra rips off mutton chop.*

Oh Arthur, protect me. I'll be yours if you do.

*Sandra grasps Max tightly.*

MAX. Miss Colleymoore, I do not feel as you suggest. You are a murderer and a seductress and I shall not be seduced.

*Max pushes Sandra away. Sandra lets out a squeal of frustration and bangs on the side of the clock. Trevor/Taylor is startled within the clock and opens the door, knocking Sandra out again.*

*Max and Trevor/Taylor look at one another. They lift her unconscious body into the clock. Having done this, they remember the audience is watching. Max looks at the script and to Trevor/Taylor. He gives Trevor/Taylor the script and gestures to present him/her to the audience. Trevor/Taylor reluctantly reads as Florence.*

TREVOR/TAYLOR. *(Reads.)* But Arthur, how can you resist me? I'm a beautiful woman.

GOLUX. Oh, I have other plans than one. Someone's coming . . . I must go. Be careful what you say and do. (*Exits into shadows and vanishes.*)

PRINCE. When shall I see you again? Golux? How did he get out of here? (*The glimmer of a lantern is seen.*)

SARALINDA. Minstrel? (*She advances from the shadows into the light.*)

PRINCE. It— It can't be. Princess Saralinda?

SARALINDA. Yes. I've come to help you. I was afraid the Golux might have forgotten.

PRINCE. He was here. I am to tell the Duke a tale about a Prince and Princess who cannot be wed until the second day after . . . Oh . . . no that was the other tale. It doesn't matter, it didn't work.

SARALINDA. It almost worked. At least it stayed my uncle's sword.

PRINCE. Now . . . I remember. I'm to implore him not to send me out to find a thousand jewels.

SARALINDA. Oh—yes—jewels, that's excellent. My uncle worships jewels. It sounds very like a possible task. He'll surely send you out to find them.

PRINCE. It was the Golux's idea.

SARALINDA. It sounds much easier than turning water into stone or swimming a lake too wide to swim. Still, you haven't any jewels, have you?

PRINCE. No. Not one.

SARALINDA. Then you'll need something to guide you in your search.

PRINCE. I was depending on the Golux . . . though of course, I never know how far to trust him.

SARALINDA. Neither do I. He's done a lot of good, though it's usually against his better judgment. You know, his mother is a witch, but rather mediocre in her way. When she tries to turn a thing to gold, all she ever gets is clay. When she tries to change her rivals into fish . . . all she ever gets is mermaids.

PRINCE. That is a great pity.

SARALINDA. And his father is a wizard who often casts spells upon himself. His favorite spell is antlers.

PRINCE. Yes . . . I know. We've met. I can only hope the Golux doesn't take after either parent.

SARALINDA. You mustn't worry. I have something the Golux gave me. It will help you in your task.

PRINCE. But Princess Saralinda . . . Why should you want to help me? I'm not a Prince. I'm nothing but a minstrel.

SARALINDA. A minstrel can be a Prince. And certainly a Prince should be something of a minstrel. It is for you, my princely minstrel, that I have waited. (*There is a sound of chains and the heavy door begins to open.*) I must go. I'll see you before the Duke sends for you.

PRINCE. Farewell.

SARALINDA. Farewell. (*She fades into the shadow.*)

(*The door of the dungeon swings open and a column of light sweeps the room finding the PRINCE seated on the floor.*)

GUARD. (*Enters the dungeon.*) The Duke commands your presence. (*Stifles a shriek and leaps into safety outside the dungeon.*) What was that?

PRINCE. What was what?

GUARD. I know not. I thought I heard the sound of someone laughing.

PRINCE. Ah-ha! The Duke is afraid of laughter?

GUARD. The Duke is not afraid of anything. Not even . . . the . . . the . . . the . . . Todal.

PRINCE. (*Loudly.*) The Todal?

GUARD. Sssh!! The Todal. (*Swallows and begins to shake.*) The Todal looks like a blob of glup. It makes a sound like rabbits screaming, and smells of old, unopened rooms. It's waiting for the Duke to fail in some endeavor, such as setting you a task that you can do.

PRINCE. And if he sets me one . . . and I succeed?